

>live on the outskirts of a tiny mountain town in Kentucky

>main part of the town is at the base of our (tinier) mountain

>one road swerves up mountain, houses spaced every couple hundred yards

>at the top is a reservoir/man-made lake, stocked with plenty of fish

>river flows down mountain, from reservoir, through town and into a larger natural lake

>my house is second highest on the mountain

>river flows right through my back yard

>best friend (Leroy) lives up the road in the highest house

>fishing with Leroy in the woods between our houses back in May

>around midnight, 1 am

>perched on a rock mid stream, two or three lines at at a time (deep river)

>Leroy sitting over the river in the branches of some trees, trying to get some carp to come outta the roots and bite

>crazy mad howling from deeper in the woods, Leroy nearly falls outta the tree

>howling followed by growling and snarling, couldn't be more than a couple hundred yards from us, downstream

>Leroy and I flash our lights at each other, stare at each other listening for 5 or so minutes

>finally, Leroy says "Damn, that was one hungry bobcat"

>we laugh, I'm still scared shitless though

>about an hour later, packing up

>I'm stuffing some carp and bass into a cooler, Leroy's trying to get out of the tree

>the base of the tree Leroy's in is on the other side of the river, he'd have to get out and then wade through the river and get to the other side where our houses/the road is

>can't see him, just hear him struggling in the brush

>hear the howl again and him scream "Andrew!"

>rip the Bowie knife out of the tackle box and dash across the river to get him

>he's bugging out on the other side of the river, the howling is crazy loud

>finally get across, light our oil lantern and toss it into the bushes

>glass breaks, fire erupts from it, catches some bushes on fire

>can see Leroy backed against the tree, nose is bleeding and there are some scrapes on his arm

>whatever it was is gone

>stomp out the fire, nope the fuck out of there

>as we're running, Leroy's hollering "That wasn't no damn bobcat! That wasn't no damn bobcat!"

>my house is closer, we run onto my porch

>wake up my girlfriend, tell her to call the sheriff

>Leroy's shirt is ripped up, tell him to take it off

>scratches and shit all up is chest

>on his chest is a big red mark, similar to a human hand's, as if

he had been slapped crazy hard

>can even make out the individual fingers

>at the end of where each finger would be is a long gash as if the thing had fucking claws

>gather our wits, try to calm down and rationalize it as some kind of punk kid

>I'm worried it's a psycho (penitentiary one county over)

>grab some guns and lanterns, not waiting on sheriff to get up here

>we left our cooler and fishing gear anyways

>Uncle chokey (my neighbor [not my uncle or his real name, just what folks in town call him]) had heard us hollering, came out with his gun and lantern too

>get back to the river, find my gear (Leroy's is on other side of river still)

>cooler is knocked over, fish are flopping around on the ground

>neither of us remember kicking it over

>several of the fish are missing

>we had caught 9 or 10, there were only 3 or 4 left flopping around

>too far away from the river, would have killed themselves before they flopped back into the water

>toss fish back into water (we don't care at this point, plenty of others)

>wade back across river

>Uncle Chokey's losing his wits behind us (he's old, about mid-to-

late 70's)

>mumbling under his breath, kind of unsettling

>get to where Leroy was attacked, find his gear

>check the mud, see mine and his bootprints

>fucking human bare footprints

>Leroy and I look at each other, fucking pale as hell

>Uncle Chokey starts yelling into the woods

>"Hey you punks get out here 'fore I feel ya! Ain't no time to be slumpin' 'round the woods!"

>no howling, nothing

>head downstream to where we first heard the howling

>mud turns to grass and brush, lose tracks

>find bushes where it happened

>deer fucking mutilated lying on ground

>front legs gone, chest ripped open, tears all in its skin

>Leroy and I heave, Uncle Chokey hollers "Damn thing is still alive!"

>sure enough poor doe is still blinking

>pupils dilated more than anything I've ever seen, as if there weren't anything but pupil

>smell of innards is overwhelming

>Leroy and I still heaving

>Uncle Chokey puts it out with his 30-06

>rifle blast echoes through the whole mountain

>hear howling again, way far off though

>Uncle Chokey's hollering again

>"Don't let me catch you boys! This ain't right! Ya'll can get jail time for this!" etc.

>Chokey's hollering, elbow Leroy and shine my lantern in front of us

>footprints again

>"Leroy shuddup, look here"

>follow prints back into the woods (at this point Sheriff Lorch has caught up with us)

>prints are going the other way, towards the bushes

>really what we're doing is heading towards where the thing came from, not where it had headed (could be back where it was, though)

>hasn't howled since Chokey shot, Lorch thinks it's a good idea to shoot again

>Chokey shoots a birch a bit off from our footprint path

>thing fucking howls from a couple yards BEHIND us

>all of us lose our shit, I throw my other lantern into the bushes like last time

>fire breaks out again, all of us catch a glimpse of a pale, completely hairless man dashing through the woods away from us

>all of us but Lorch fucking fire in its direction

>howling getting further and further away

>Lorch freaking out "Don't shoot don't shoot!"

>Leroy, chokey and I unload our rifles/shotguns, all four of us look at each other in our lantern light, scared shitless

>everyone reloads, walk back out of the woods, pick up our shit, go home for the night

>next day all (three) sheriffs, me and Leroy, Chokey, and some other folks head back into the woods

>deer is gone

>find the tree Chokey shot

>a tree behind where we had all stood and shot wildly at the thing is scratched and cut up

>obvious not deer rubbings, these are deep slashes

>find these on nearly all of the trees behind the tree Chokey had shot

>the thing had been following us

>head through the brush and search in the direction the thing had ran

>find some bullet holes in the trees where we had shot after it

>in the brush and grass find what looks like a pig run (grass/brush pushed away to the side, sort of like a path)

>blood in it

>we had either hit it, or this is what the way it dragged that deer

>follow pig run single file, Leroy in front, followed by me, deputy sheriff (some kid like 19), Chokey, other deputy, and finally Lorch

>all of us have rifles loaded and ready

>pig run leads all the way to the edge of the woods

>at the end is the edge of the mountain, drops almost immediately (like 90 degrees)

>endless valley of trees and shit

>nobody lives there

>nobody goes there

>nobody owns this land

>only people who head back there are moonshiners and hunters

>too far down to see if the thing is down there

>fucking nope it out of the woods

>sheriff calls search off (only way for the thing to get back up the mountain and into our woods is through the town)

>Leroy and I try to shrug it off, still scared shitless

>Chokey in the bar in town always telling the stories to traveling hikers of the psycho in the woods, and to never cross the river

>fucking nobody crosses the river anymore

>Leroy and I still fish in that same place, can sometimes hear that howling again

>never hear it coming from our side of the river

Leroy's scratches were treated at the hospital a few counties over as "animal wounds." We aren't the only people in town that have sighted it, but the only people who've been attacked by it. Even some of the hikers come back to town talking about some creepy ass guy staring at them from the other side of the river.